

## Video wall may save historic Athens buildings

ATHENS - A huge video wall may save two historic buildings threatened with demolition for blocking the view of Greece's new Acropolis Museum, architects say.

Greek architects came up with hundreds of ideas to save the two landmarks, which stand in front of the new museum, due to open this week and expected to give new impetus to Greece's efforts to bring home the Parthenon marbles from Britain.

"These buildings should not be demolished because they are priceless, they are part of one of the most beautiful streets in Athens," architect Thomas Doxiades, told Reuters on Tuesday. "A street is like a smile. When teeth are removed, empty spaces ruin its beauty."

Residents, artists and politicians have protested a Culture Ministry decision to demolish them and the case is being examined by a top court, which may overrule the ministry.

Weeks before the inauguration of the new museum which has been plagued by legal battles and missed deadlines, Greece's Culture Minister Antonis Samaras, proposed to move the facades of the buildings to nearby plots, but architects said the landmarks also form a unity. One of the buildings is hailed as a prime example of art deco in Athens, designed by an award-winning Greek architect, and boasts statues and mosaics on its facade. The other, neo-classical building on the pedestrian street which surrounds about half of the Acropolis, belongs to music composer Vangelis Papathanasiou, of Chariots of Fire fame.

Greek architects took part in a national competition organized by e-magazine [www.greekarchitects.gr](http://www.greekarchitects.gr) and came up with ideas that would preserve the buildings without allowing their unattractive backs ruin the museum's view of the Acropolis. More than 170 solutions were submitted. The winning proposal suggested building a wall visually extending the massive walls of the Acropolis and covering the back of the landmarks.

"The government has to realize that this is merely a design problem and can be solved. The state must not see our buildings as rivals but as neighbors," said architect Nikos Rousseas who has his office in one of the buildings.

## Trio have a way with words

THE well-written words of three year 8 students at Danebank Anglican School for Girls have been recognised. Student Carol Azzam, 12, achieved first in her age group in the Sydney Writer's Festival Write Now competition while Hannah Wallace and Kathryn Ling, both 12, were recognised in a Hurstville Council writing competition. The competition asked students to respond to the Prime Minister's Apology to Indigenous people. The girls both wrote poems and said they enjoyed writing about a given topic.

"Writing allows me to express what I'm passionate about," said Kathryn.

English teacher Mina Angelopoulos said she was proud of the young writers: "They show a maturity in their writing and have all produced imaginative works of high standard."

Article from St George and Sutherland Shire Leader- By Erika Seymour



Write here, write now: Students Carol Azzam (back), Hannah Wallace (front) Kathryn Ling (far right) of Danebank Anglican School were awarded for their writing, Teacher Mina Angelopoulos (rear) was proud as punch. PICTURE: Jane Dyson

## Rewind

Interview: Paul Connolly  
from Life goes On

## 1975 TONY MANIATI

As a young TV news reporter for the ABC, the journalist arrived in East Timor in search of adventure and ended up reporting the deaths of five of his colleagues.

This was taken on the foreshore opposite the Hotel Turismo in Dili a few days before the deaths of five journalists who became known as the Balibo Five. The Turismo was the de facto headquarters of Fretilin [Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor], which was running the territory after the Portuguese administration withdrew. The first night I stayed there with my [ABC News] cameraman and soundman, we could hear gunshots and realised we were in a dangerous environment. But I was only 26 at the time and single, and I saw it as a career - building move to take on a major assignment.

We decided to make the two-day overlaid trip to Balibo, on the border of Indonesian West Timor, to get footage of skirmishes between Indonesian and Fretilin forces. I was doing a piece to camera when an artillery shell whistled over our heads and exploded 100 metres behind us. It was a spine-chilling sound I'll never forget. We then came under sustained artillery attack. The Indonesians were either trying to scare us away, so



they couldn't be filmed, or kill us.

Our Fretilin escorts immediately pulled out and we all had a dramatic return over a day or so back to Dili. We encountered the Channel 7 crew [reporter Greg Shackleton, 27, sound recordist Tony Stewart, 21, and cameraman Gary Cunningham, 27], who were on their way to Balibo. I said to Shackleton: "Don't go up there, it's too dangerous." But of course he was determined to push on.

When we got back to Dili the Channel 9 crew [reporter Malcolm Rennie, 28, and cameraman Brian Peters, 29], had flown in. I knew Malcolm and said. "Wait here a few days, cool off and see what's happening". But because they knew channel 7

were at Balibo they couldn't be stopped, either.

Both crews were still in Balibo on October 16 when Indonesian troops and Timorese militias stormed into the town, pulled them aside to the so-called "Chinese house" in the main square, and shot and stabbed them to death.

I had the difficult task of filing that report, which was the biggest story of my life at that point. At the time, we had no idea they'd been brutally executed in full knowledge of who they were. We assumed they'd been caught in crossfire, as both the Indonesian and Australian governments insisted for so long. After that I was a marked man. Knowing the Indonesian forces were invading, I

was aware if I was caught in Dili I'd suffer the same fate. I suggested to the ABC it was too dangerous for me in Dili, but I was told a good reporter stays with the story. Days later, I lost my nerve. When a plane flew in from Darwin I got out. The experience shattered a lot of my youthful idealism about the power of journalism.

### Fast forward

These days I am married with two sons 13 and 10. I am a journalism lecturer at the University of Technology, Sydney, and I've just written a book called *Shooting Balibo: blood and memory in East Timor*. I was also a historical consultant on Robert Connolly's film, *Balibo* [which will open the Melbourne International Film Festival on July 24]. That required me to go back to Balibo for the first time since the murders. I discussed it with my wife Amanda and she said: "you must go". It was traumatic, especially going back to the house where the five were murdered.

Tony Maniati was born in Brisbane, Australia in 1949, the son of a Greek father and an Australian mother. Most of his early life was spent in and around the family's corner stores.